The Commonweal

December 21, 1951

Pacifism and Conscience

Michael de la Bedoyere

Dirt on the Waterfront II

John C. Cort

Red Puritans

Gunnar D. Kumlien

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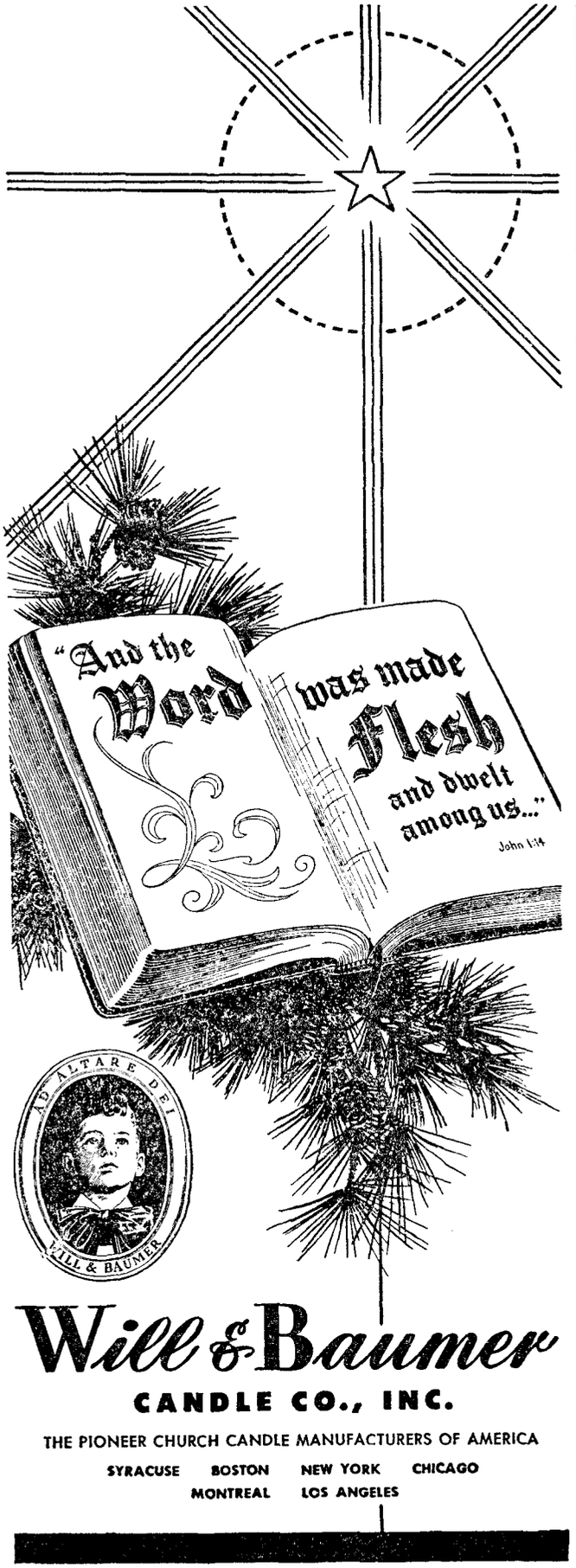

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

A Scandal Grows

THE imminence of election year gives new impetus to the continuing revelations of venality in Washington and other centers of American political activity. Corruption in office is already a leading campaign issue. Public indignation grows. It is registered in all segments of the population.

On the strictly political level two of the elements in the situation are particularly disquieting as far as reform is concerned. Ideals of office have fallen to their present low estate because the electorate has been so apathetic. Although a republic such as ours is *per se* dependent on the active participation of the citizenry, both at and between election times, most of us have abandoned civic responsibilities to others. The zeal of those who are out for personal gain at public expense has clearly outmatched the zeal of men primarily desirous of the common good. The fault goes deep.

Moreover, the simplicist solution of a change of administration, of "throwing the rascals out," is a mirage. Not only have recent revelations implicated the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, but coming investigations of other bureaus and departments of our government are confidently expected to reveal their complement of Republican offenders. Recent news items about localities dominated by Republican political machines are anything but reassuring.

As Democrats have had the lion's share of the opportunities for personal aggrandizement the past twenty years, a number of men in public office and their businessmen friends have made much of their innings at the plate. This process has been aided and abetted by the growth of government in this country during the past twenty years. Defense contracts alone have run well into the billions. Possibly a few mink coats sound measly in comparison.

But, as Representative Eugene McCarthy said in these pages last week, the heart of the matter is our anemic sense of values. This is aptly illustrated in the case of Frank E. McKinney, the new Democratic Party chairman. Mr. McKinney recently emphasized his party's determination that "no malefactor in public office shall go unpunished." Soon after assuming office he declared that the venerable slogan that "public office is a public trust" will be his "watchword" as party chairman.

Two weeks after the delivery of these righteous remarks newspapers with a Republican bent carried screaming headlines about the profits he and his political sponsor had made in a business deal five years previously. Within ten months a thousand dollar investment had blossomed into seventy times that amount. Mr. McKinney was outraged at the fuss that was made about it. "Is it unethical, is it criminal for a Democrat to hold a lawful business investment? If it is, you would have to go down in some abbey and get a monk to run the party."

LET us assume that everything was above board in his purchase of stock in the Empire Tractor Corporation. Suppose it to be simply another instance of an American businessman's getting a tip and taking a "flyer" in a legitimate enterprise that looked "hot" in a speculative way. The fact that $25,000 worth of Empire Tractor preferred stock had to be purchased as part of the transaction increased his risk. The question remains: what entitled Mr. McKinney to such an exorbitant profit? Does the element of risk, if there was much in this case, entitle a man to a return of such proportions on the basis of any accepted social principle? Yet Mr. McKinney's indignation no doubt reflects a widespread attitude.

If men in public life are to leave ethical behavior to "the monk in his abbey," this nation has a dim future indeed.

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Theirs But to Obey

A PERSON'S disinclination to comply with his doctor's orders has long been a source of many of our stock jokes. Take the case of the aging business tycoon whose doctor limits him to one cigar a day. The man gets round it by laying in a supply of the biggest stogies that can be had—fat as a frankfurter and a good six inches long. The patient may shorten his days by his ingenuity in formally complying with his physician's decree or he may simply cut a rather silly figure; the serious implications seldom go further than his own personal fate.

Such is hardly the situation when medical services are provided by the State, under some such system as prevails in Britain. For a while a British patient could actually be fined for refusing to obey his doctor's orders. Then the law was changed. Now the British doctors in the national health scheme are clamoring for a return of these penalties for uncooperative patients. It is all a logical if painful corollary of having such services provided by the State. Why should anyone be permitted to waste the taxpayers' money by non-compliance?

The general idea of forcing people to take orders from their doctor is grim enough. It is a steep price to pay for having adequate medical care available for everyone. But it is possible to think of situations where such penalties would constitute a tyranny of the most odious sort. Suppose a doctor employed by the State should order an abortion, sterilization, or the use of contraceptives, when a patient unable to pay a fine cannot in conscience consent to any of these things. Could there be a clearer case of overreaching by the State?

The Squeeze on Small Business

WE ARE living in a power world. It is the vast agglomerations of economic or political power that call the play whenever there is a contest over such things as strategic raw materials. With the United States and the Soviet Union pre-empting such materials for their war machines and their stockpiles, the lesser nations have been feeling the pinch. The scramble for certain key commodities has shot commodity prices up to such a point that previous budgetary calculations have proved sadly out of line. This is one of the difficulties currently harassing France and Britain.

Something similar has been transpiring on our own domestic terrain, with the giant corporations getting a strangle hold on certain scarce materials among which copper and aluminum are preeminent. The danger is that a lack of raw materials will force a number of our smaller enterprises to the wall; they will be unable to continue at anything like capacity except as sub-contractors for big business. Their independence — if not their very continuance—will be in jeopardy.

The ideal of small and independent enterprise has a way of attracting public sentiment in the United States. The strength of its appeal is so widely recognized that recently small business was adopted as a mask by an anti-cooperative big-business lobby in Washington. If prices were the same and there were a similar range of choice, people would much prefer to patronize their local independent grocer instead of a neighborhood chain store. In an era of big business and bigger government there is a surprising residuum of support for independent enterprise of a local sort.

Happily, as the squeeze on materials grows, our smaller enterprises are getting strong support in Washington. The Small Defense Plants Administrator, Brigadier General Telford Taylor, has taken a most vigorous stand on behalf of his many clients. He is tireless in calling upon the Administration to provide "greater procurement opportunities" for small manufacturers and to make more effective use of their substantial productive facilities. As the crucial defense production effort of 1952 gets fully under way, General Taylor's work will take on increasing national importance.

• NEXT WEEK •

HENRY RAGO writes of a recent experience in "Christmas in Positano."

"The cobbler smiles at your impatience, and the old woman tells you she's busy baking zeppoli for her grandchildren. The world is becoming unmanageable quickly and oddly, and nothing much can be done. So the midnight discovered us, with all the others, in the tiny piazza outside the church, waiting for the priest and his procession of small boys to come with the Bambino. There were loud explosions of firecrackers here and there in the crowd."

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Mr. Churchill's Visit

IT WAS a favorite tactic of some of Winston Churchill's opponents in the recent election campaign in England to make use of the question "Whose finger do you want on the trigger?" as a means of implying that a vote for Churchill was a vote for war. Mr. Churchill keenly resented the implication that he was less adept at solving the world's problems by a display of statesmanlike negotiation than by a further application of blood, sweat and tears. He told the British voter that he wanted nothing so much as one final chance to bring the East and West together in a spirit of peaceful negotiation.

Since the election Mr. Churchill has made no flamboyant, trigger-happy gestures; he has made no effort to bully the Soviet Union with the big stick of American atomic power. His Conservative Government has, in fact, done just the opposite. Anthony Eden set the tone of the Conservatives' foreign policy by going to Paris and declaring, before the UN, that so far as he was concerned, he would not resort to name-calling whatever the provocation. What Mr. Eden apparently sought to do was to create the proper atmosphere for the negotiation that Churchill had spoken about during the campaign.

There is now further evidence that this is what the Churchill Government is trying to do. On one occasion the other day the British said that they were supporting a Russian proposal in the UN, even though their action might stir up resentment in the United States, because they believed that this particular proposal regarding the composition of the Security Council would lead to making the UN a more broadly-based forum of Eastern and Western states. On this point the British were candid enough, but it would seem that they are not being quite so candid about their reasons for refusing to participate more actively in the formation of a European army or in the Schuman Plan for European economic union. Although Mr. Churchill was a crusading spokesman for European union when he was out of office, he and his new Government have emphatically refused to join the present plans for European military and economic union. While it is true that Britain must plead Commonwealth commitments as a reason for standing aloof from the Continent, it is altogether likely that in this matter, too, Mr. Churchill is at pains not to create an air of hostility by pushing European union so vigorously as to identify Britain with the Continent and thus give the Russians the impression that he is bent on war and not on negotiation.

Next month Mr. Churchill is coming to Washington and it has already been announced that one of the things he will discuss with the President is the possibility of holding high-level talks with Stalin to relieve the pressure of the cold war. Churchill, of course, fully agrees with the President on the futility of talking with the Russians until the persuasiveness of Western strength is a more compelling factor in the Russian mind, but Churchill knows, more desperately than Mr. Truman, that the British people cannot hope to eat decently until the burden of cold-war expenditures is at least partly lifted. Domestic pressures such as this cannot forever be put off with an appeal to the people for more austerity, if the Conservatives expect to stay in power and ride out the storm of Bevanite oratory. Neither can Mr. Churchill prove, to the satisfaction of all, that he is not a warmonger until he has taken definite steps to bring upon England the more relaxed state of peace that the people seek.

And so it is that a most important decision will have to be made next month in Washington: whether to talk with Stalin now or to delay these talks and carry out the plans for European union with greater determination. It is certain that if talks are undertaken now, Stalin will demand, for one thing, that the West give up its idea of integrating German troops into a European army. This matter alone shows the crucial importance of timing these negotiations properly, because neither Churchill nor Truman could now agree to such a condition if they hope eventually to make Germany secure.

It is hard to believe that Mr. Churchill's out-of-office instincts about the wisdom of European union were not the right instincts. Somewhere short of war, negotiation on the highest level must be attempted, but it is unlikely that talks of this nature could succeed while Europe is as vulnerable as it is today. Europe would, in fact, be less vulnerable if Mr. Churchill could find a way to put his Government and his people behind the idea of union he believes in.

International Heroes

ALL through World War II there was a consciousness that a few Americans were 'taking it' while the rest enjoyed life as usual, or almost as usual. If you were in the training camps, with a service club, the USO and the post theatres a stone's throw away, you would stop

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every now and then and think of the GI's in Africa, say, or in Italy, or of the Marines on Guadalcanal. They were thousands of miles away and even though you might be wearing a uniform their world seemed dim and distant. But there was always an awareness that they were there while you were here.

Later, maybe you were a rear-area soldier, a chairborne GI or what *Yank* used to call scornfully a USO Commando. Then there were the 'guys on the line' to think about.

Even civilians were not free from the dim feeling of guilt and self-accusation. People stood in lines for nylons and complained about it, they griped about cigarette shortages, grumbled about gas coupons and were put out because steak was not on the menu—but there was always somebody around to remind them that there was a war on. If they had any sense of decency they took the hint.

It might not have been a keen sense of participation that people everywhere felt. The angry men returning from the battle fronts who blasted civilian complacency had much to go on. But there was something—an uneasiness, an awareness that the sacrifices were unequally shared.

Throughout the Korean war there has been almost none. "The boys in Korea" creep into public speeches, magazine articles and television forums—but more for rhetorical flourish than from human compassion. It is not that the war in Korea is any less bloody, dirty or cruel than war was seven or eight years ago, but that the mood here at home is so different.

This time it is almost as if the war was a very minor chord in the total symphony of American life. People don't feel uneasy about enjoying comforts and convenience—not from hardness of heart but simply because they hardly think about what is going on so many miles away, unless someone close is deeply involved in it.

Korea has meant a great political debate in this country, focusing around Mr. Truman and General MacArthur. Again, the fact of it has been used as a taking-off point for partisan controversy. In the early days it was a kind of backdrop for peripheral display—leading columnists and correspondents and photographers were rushed overseas and the reporting of the war became almost an end in itself. But gradually they have returned to their stateside or European desks. In late months the war has been reported routinely, almost like the stock market.

Its *presence* has not been made immediate. To the average newspaper reader, the issues are still very obscure; the meaning of this first international attempt to stand up to aggression has been somewhat hazy. There are many reasons, but primarily because what is nominally a "police action," unfortunately, is so predominantly American the essential international meaning of it is often lost. There have been jeerings at the very words "police action" because the action has all the external characteristics of full-scale war.

Somehow the idea was gathered that a "police action" would entail only a small-scale military action. Still it is the purpose and meaning of the action, not the scale of it, that makes the original term meaningful. The original resolution to meet the aggression in Korea was prompted by a desire to limit international violence and prevent general war—a "police action."

How well the action has succeeded remains for history to tell. What the state of the world would be today had the Korean aggression gone unmet, is anybody's guess—but the experiences of Ethiopia and of Hitler's pre-Munich conquests are a fairly pertinent indication. What the world would now be like, at the end of 1951, had all the excited calls to drop the atom bomb in Korea, fight an all-out war, etc., had been taken, is something else to think about.

Given the uncertainties of the times and the fact of an insidious, unscrupulous aggressive force at large in the world, the future necessarily remains a big question mark. Korea has not changed things in any clear-cut way. It may have dissuaded future aggressors, or it may not have. That has been the gamble.

It certainly marks a turning point in the concept of free world unity. The action has been fought without the glamor and patriotic fervor that usually go with war. For that very reason people at home have seemed almost indifferent. But probably no soldiers in history have had a more significant role than the UN troops in Korea. They have fought for the peaceful ideal that is incarnated in the United Nations organization—and their sufferings will bear fruit for the world, not merely their own countries. They have earned the gratitude of free men everywhere. By their sacrifices—it is not beyond belief—the world has been spared the horror of a third world war.

Last week we referred to criticisms of the social policy of the Franco regime in Spain which the New York *Times* ascribed to Cardinal Segura of Seville. The *Times* has since published a correction. The speech in question was made instead by Archbishop Marcellino Loizaga of Valencia.

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Pacifism and the Christian Conscience

Is there any escape from the dilemma that modern war and warfare provide?

By MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE

THERE is no cause for surprise today in the fact that during the lifetime of a man of about forty to fifty the deeply anxious question about the proper Christian attitude towards war has been pondered and debated as never before since the early days of Christianity. The era of savage and all-embracing conflict during which we have lived has coincided with an increase in the delicacy of consciences where violence and suffering are concerned, and this delicacy, in its turn, has made most thoughtful Christians especially aware of the humanitarian and ethical side of Christ's teaching. Consequently, many Catholics—some of them openly, more of them perhaps in their hearts—have asked themselves whether it is really possible to reconcile participation in these great wars with the whole ideal of their religious and spiritual life.

At this point, the reader may feel that he is recognizing a state of affairs which rings truer of the years between the two wars than it does today. This, I think, is true; and it is because it is true that it seems worthwhile making the observations which follow. Something, of course, has happened to force most of us to put Christian pacifist problems at the back of our minds rather than leave them in the forefront. That something began with a realization of the evil and danger of Hitlerism, and that something has been greatly strengthened with the sense of the aggressive, all-destructive evil and danger of Communism. To be a pacifist, or even to worry unduly about Christianity and modern war, when civilization itself — when Christianity itself — is in deadly peril at the hands of naked, Godless tyranny is surely so senseless, so unrealistic, as to make those who still worry seem to be cranks rather than specially sensitive Catholics. On the other hand, the development of atomic and even worse weapons, together with the general realization that a war tomorrow would involve a far greater suffering and general disaster than even the last war, can hardly fail to cause, and indeed to increase, disquiet in any at all delicate Catholic conscience.

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And so the general position seems to be that while we are quite unable to think of military preparation for resistance, if need be, to aggressive Communism as other than reconcilable with Christianity, we have buried somewhere at the back of our Christian minds a very real worry about the possibility of equating any sort of Christian outlook with the horror and mass destruction which we know to be involved in modern atomic warfare. This divided state of mind cannot be healthy. We may be able to tolerate it at present when the first horn of the dilemma is so sharp, but it is likely sooner or later to come back on us and cause a reaction which may be very bitter and disturbing.

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IS THERE any escape? It seems to me that in so far as we try to turn back to the classic teaching of theologians about the just war, we shall only become the more deeply bogged in the dilemma. Is it, for example, really possible to find any moral justification for the use of atomic weapons in terms of this traditional teaching? I know that the hard-pressed theologian can work out an abstract case for the legitimate use of the atom bomb. If an atom bomb is dropped on a fleet at sea or in port, or on some great specifically military area, or perhaps even on some sparsely inhabited stretch of country of vital strategic importance, the principle of double effect can reasonably be applied. The aim is clearly military; the destruction of a non-military character resulting is secondary. But in fact we know that the strategists will use atomic weapons for the purpose of making life so unpleasant and indeed so impossible for enemy powers that these will yield rather than endure more horror. And this use of the weapon merely carries to a far higher degree the aim of total destruction already put into operation during the later stages of the last war—an aim which few moral theologians could find justified even in 1944 and 1945.

But is this the only Christian mode of approach? It seems to me arguable that the classic teaching is really an attempt to clarify and codify the Christian tradition in terms of military conditions which obtained for a thousand years and

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more, but which no longer obtain today. That Christian tradition springs, of course, from the teaching and attitude of Our Lord.

There has been immense and endless argument about the relevant texts from Scripture, and this argument has led nowhere. The apparently pacifist texts are answered by Our Lord's readiness to see two swords used on his behalf (Luke 22, 38), by His own recourse to force, and by His evident tolerance of soldiers and of the military equipment of the earthly State.

But if we think in terms not of individual texts, but of the general sense of Christ's teaching, it surely becomes clear that Our Lord recognizes the legitimacy of two levels of conduct. There is His own specific, wholly spiritual, call to a way of life entirely above that level of pride, selfishness and force which characterizes unregenerate man and which in large degree seems to remain a basis of the State and consequently political life. But the remarkable and indeed unique quality of Christ as a reformer is that His preaching of these highest principles is reconciled in practice with a tolerance of, and a participation in, the temporal, earthly, practical order. Our Lord mixes with publicans and sinners. He loves the earthly Jerusalem. He accepts soldiers. He finds a place for everything. Above all, He recognizes the authority of the conquering, but established, Roman State.

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SURELY this actual combination of the highest spiritual ideal ever put before man and the acceptance, indeed love, of the unregenerate world simply means that Our Lord sees in this world the matter or material that is destined to be spiritualized and to become God's Kingdom. The unregenerate world is not to be destroyed; nor is it to be suddenly *trans*formed. It is to be gradually *re*formed and spiritualized; and it is the vocation of the follower of Christ to belong to that world in order to reform it, thus making it a more suitable vehicle for the move upwards to the highest realization of life, the coming of the Kingdom, which can never be fully achieved in this world.

Christianity has indeed applied the teaching of its Founder in this way. It recognizes a natural order, as well as a supernatural order. The supernatural is founded on the natural, and both in their own order are capable of development and higher degrees of perfection. Thus it is true that if the State, with all its order and technique, belongs to the natural order, it need not remain at a lower stage where everything is decided solely in terms of pride, selfishness and force. History has shown that the State can rise from a brute level to a higher level where considerations of justice and humanitarianism, both internal and in its relations with other states, gradually become so important as to challenge power and empire. And as this evolution proceeds so does it become easier to rise from the natural level and answer the supernatural call. But history has also shown that States and the standards of the political world can relapse, and drift back near to barbarism. But in the midst of this forward or backward evolution, the work of the individual Christian remains essentially the same: to participate in that natural world with the ideal of raising its standards by always witnessing to the supernatural level which Our Lord came into the world to teach and preach.

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AGAINST this background it is easy to see how the Church at a certain period of the upward evolution of the State could show how far recourse to force was consistent both with the supernatural end of life and the natural level of the State—in other words could teach the conditions for the just recourse to warfare, and preach such an ideal as the truce of God.

But what happens at a period of history when there is a drop back into barbaric standards and an immense advance in the destructive powers of weapons of war? What is the position of the Christian then?

It is not for the present writer, who makes no claim whatever to being a theologian, to attempt to answer the question in technical terms. But one may be permitted to observe that the mission of the Christian remains always the same, namely to accept what is essential and necessary of the terms within which the life of society survives, and to make use of those terms as the raw material for raising natural standards and witnessing to their fulfilment at the supernatural level.

Does not this really involve us in the following position? In so far as it is true—and I am not here arguing whether or not it *is* true—that resistance to a hostile and all-destructive aggression involves recourse to atomic weapons and atomic strategy, then the Christian citizen must play his part in that resistance—but with one object and one motive only, in so far as he is a follower of Christ, namely to preach and teach the Kingdom of God from within this particular set of circumstances. In other words, one might say that the lower and more barbaric the necessary means, the more urgent the Christian duty to set the highest supernatural standards. In times when the preaching of the Gospel had raised the standards of natural civilization, it was at least pardonable if the Catholic tended to lapse into acquiescence in those standards as seemingly sufficient. In times like these when barbarism and Godlessness on one side, and corruption and scepticism on the other, are in the as-

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cendant, the true Christian duty is certainly not to acquiesce in these evils, but neither is it to escape from the material and natural duties and sacrifices which they entail. Is it not rather to see in these a means of world purgation, a destroying fire, which if the Gospel is preached and lived again by the Christian can be a prelude to the renovation of the world and, if God wills, an ascent to a spiritual height greater than any hitherto reached?

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I CANNOT pretend that such a solution to the dilemma works out without difficulties, but I suggest that it is only in some such state of mind that the Christian can hope to play his apostolic role in days like these—to share the burdens and problems of the world, as Our Lord did, taking every occasion of teaching the truth and raising the spiritual and moral level around him, and thus echoing Christ's call to the realization by every fellow man of his supernatural destiny from within the world of matter, sin and corruption. To condemn our desperate, even atomic, struggle for survival and have no part in it smacks surely of the Pharisee who condemned Our Lord for mixing with publicans and sinners. On the other hand, to fail to condemn what is wrong and to fail to draw the true spiritual moral from it and to fail to redouble our efforts to persuade the world that the only real remedy lies in turning again to our Father in Heaven is to deny the relevance of the Gospel itself.

FROM ITALY

Red Puritans

IT WAS an Hungarian refugee priest who told me that when the Communists came to power in Hungary, the Catholic parish priests found themselves confronted with a rather unexpected situation having to do with the moral climate of the country. Previously, the priest said, one of the greatest problems facing the parish priest in Hungary, as in any country in the West, had been that of sexual morality, but when the Communists took over, sex seemed little by little to be pushed into the background. For instance, there was no longer a problem about the morality of films, because films from the West were banished and replaced by Russian ones and these, said the refugee priest, were unobjectionable from the point of view of sexual morality. The Protestant clergy found this to be true, too. Obscene literature and shows and organized prostitution disappeared almost overnight. This was even the case with less provocative films dealing with cheap and superficial romance. Public life, at least externally, became strangely sexless.

The Catholics were very much surprised at all this, because they remembered what happened to family life immediately after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Divorce was made a mere formality. But since then, a turnabout has apparently taken place; externally, the Communists have reverted to the Victorian Age.

The new and tremendous problem for pastors, the priest told me, is the relentless and insidious indoctrination of youth. Religious teaching is drowned in Marxist history, Marxist geography, Marxist chemistry, Marxist biology and Marxist philology. There is no way to escape it. The youngest generation, which has no memory of how things were before, breathes Marxism as freely as the air, without even realizing it. The Church is gradually losing contact with the young. The new enemy is even more treacherous than the old one.

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SO MUCH for what the Hungarian priest had to say. It seems to be a fact, and one that is overlooked in the West, that a League of Public Decency would probably not have much to do on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The looseness, the moral chaos of the early years of the Russian Revolution has been replaced by a strange external puritanism, which reminds one of the Jacobins and the Calvinists. The West can hardly talk any more about the Communists' lack of public sexual morality, but the Communists can and do talk about the "bourgeois dissolution" of the West.

It is interesting to note, apropos of this matter of Communist morality, that there has been talk about a new disease, called the "partisan illness," that appeared toward the end of World War II in Marshal Tito's Communist partisan army. This disease, which seems to appear more frequently among men than women, is symptomized by a certain blackout of conscience, followed by convulsions, during which the victim appears to fight with monsters or to pursue erotic impulses.

Swiss doctors who have had an opportunity to study these cases do not hesitate to describe the disease as a sort of outburst of compulsively inhibited sexuality. The fact is that the sexual discipline in Tito's partisan army was drastic. Since many women were fighting in its ranks, this is understandable. The sexual abstinence practiced by the victims of the "partisan's illness" had not been motivated by an ethical ideal but was imposed by fear of punishment; that is why the compensation, according to the Swiss doctors, was so violent.

Something similar has happened in the Red Army, where no brothels or organized prostitution are tolerated as they are, officially or unofficially, in many Western armies, and this would seem at least partly to explain the bestiality of the rapes which took place wherever the Red Army advanced. Apparently the ideal behavior favored by the Red warlords somewhat resembles that of the blind and sexless termite.

The "official" Soviet expert on education, Professor

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A. S. Makarenko, insists, in his book *Advice to Fathers and Mothers,* upon the authority of the family father, on the solidity of the family itself and on the necessity of keeping the children in ignorance as long as possible regarding the matter of procreation. When instruction becomes necessary, he says that the father should instruct his son, the mother her daughter. He condemns free love, which obtained immediately after the October Revolution; he considers this "unworthy of a human being" and as leading to the destruction of the family.

The new marriage laws of Communist China are conceived in the same puritan-like spirit that pervades the other "People's Democracies."

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WHAT has happened? Are the Communists gradually reverting to a belief in the moral values on which the Christian civilization of the West is founded? Do they admit of ethics in practice if not in theory?

The answer is, no. This puritanism is nothing but a rationalization of production. It is purely utilitarian. They have discovered—and it is not difficult to discover, after all—that there is nothing that can take up more of an individual's time than sex. To attain the aim of sexual activity—that is, new workers and new soldiers—it is not necessary to give so much time to it as is done in the capitalist societies.

Since the family as an institution has proved to be the best means of reaching that aim, it is safeguarded. At the same time, the family is sufficiently controlled so that it cannot become resistant to ideological indoctrination. Thus, a minimum of time is devoted to the production of children while a maximum is devoted to five-year plans, military training and ideological indoctrination. Hence the need for sexual discipline imposed by the state.

As is apparent from all this, George Orwell is once again proved to have been one of the most penetrating writers who ever tried to analyze the spirit of Communism. One thinks of *Animal Farm* and of Winston, in the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* who is punished so terribly not only for having plotted against Big Brother but for having robbed his party of so many hours of extra work by becoming involved in a private love affair.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

An Appeal

CARE, of 20 Broad St., New York 5, N. Y., urges Americans this Christmas to remember the world's forgotten children. A current release mentions the 250,000 war orphans in France, the three million homeless boys and girls in Italy, the war victims in Greece and Finland, the many needy in Korea, Japan and the Philippines. CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc.) is a non-profit organization with offices in a number of American cities. It accepts orders for food, blanket and clothing packages designated for children's institutions in 21 European and Asian countries. The price of a standard food package is $10.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Dirt on the Waterfront II

DIRT comes out slowly. Several months ago the Columbia Broadcasting System put on a remarkable program in its "Nation's Nightmare" series. It was an exposé of crime on the New York waterfront. I recently saw the text of the program. It is sensational and at the same time, I believe, as soberly factual as a baseball score.

Several years ago, in 1947, the International Longshoremen's Association, AFL, had a convention at the Commodore Hotel in New York. The ILA holds them every four years, which is about the longest interval existing between conventions anywhere in the labor movement. I recently saw the minutes, all 283 pages of them, and read almost every one of them, all but the dullest speeches by the galaxy of guest speakers who must have gassed the delegates into a state of coma.

I saw the list of delegates and the names of the mobsters sprinkled among them: men like Mike Clementi of Local 856 on the lower East Side, an ex-convict, lieutenant of the notorious Socks Lanza and an associate of the now executed murderer, Squint Sheridan; men like Alex DiBrizzi of Local 920, another ex-con who is mob leader of the Staten Island waterfront. An ILA organizer for some time and, like all ILA organizers, appointed by President Joseph P. Ryan, DiBrizzi was rewarded for faithful service at last summer's convention by being elevated to the rank of international vice-president, with Ryan's support.

★

I ALSO saw in these minutes how on the last afternoon of the convention, in a period that could not have been much more than 45 minutes and might have been less, Joe Ryan and his well-oiled machine put through 21 amendments to the constitution. On only one of these was there discussion of any kind. On another Ryan asked a question and the chairman of the constitution committee gave a brief explanation. On no other amendment did the latter offer any explanation. Two sections of the constitution were eliminated without even the formality of reading them to the convention so that none of the delegates, except those who belonged to the constitution committee, could possibly have known what they were voting for. This is really something. I have seen undemocratic conventions, including some pretty neat railroading jobs by Communist operators, but even the Commies would never dare try anything as raw as that. I quote from the minutes, pp. 267-268:

"READING CLERK ROCHE: Article XXVI, Section 22, at Page 43, shall be stricken from the Constitution. The

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following articles shall be re-numbered to correspond.

"First Vice-President Holt: I move the adoption of the report of the Committee.

"Delegate Mack A. Fowlkes: I second the motion.

"President Ryan: (the Chairman): All in favor of the adoption of the report of the Committee will signify by saying 'aye;' opposed 'no.' It is carried and so ordered."

It is a requirement of parliamentary law that the Chairman ask if there is any discussion before putting a motion to a vote. On ten of these amendments Ryan did so. On ten, including the above, he did not bother to do so. The 21st went as follows:

"Reading Clerk Roche: The Rules of Order at Page 49 [of the Constitution] shall be amended by striking therefrom Section 30 and the remaining sections shall be numbered to correspond." Holt and Fowlkes moved and seconded respectively.

"President Ryan: If there is no discussion, all in favor, etc." And good old Section 30, unwept, unhonored, unread and unknown, stood stricken from the ILA Constitution.

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THE one amendment on which there was discussion gave rise to a pathetic little incident. The Secretary-Treasurer, John R. Owens, had also been the union's legislative agent under the old set-up, which provided that "He shall act as legislative agent of the ILA as directed by the President."

Without explaining who was meant by "he," Reading Clerk Roche, reporting for the committee, moved that the sentence be changed to read: "He shall act as legislative agent of the ILA *if* directed by the President."

Unfortunately, Owens was present and recognized that part of his own job was being taken away from him. He spoke: "This change in language takes away from me in the Constitution the right to be the legislative agent. In the Executive Council meeting President Ryan told me that that section was not to be changed. I asked Brother Holt [chairman of the Constitution committee] if anything applying to me were to come up I was to be notified.

"It is not my desire now to obstruct the majority report, but President Ryan had assured me it would not be changed.

"President Ryan: I still feel it has not been changed." He then spoke for about five minutes on the motion, explaining why it had in fact been changed, in violation of the parliamentary rule which says that no chairman shall speak on a motion unless he first relinquishes the chair. This is a common violation in any meeting that Ryan chairs. He knows the rule, because now and then he does give up the chair to speak on a motion. And then takes it back immediately, in violation of parliamentary law, so that he can make sure the vote goes through.

After Ryan spoke on Owens' demotion there was no further discussion and the amendment was carried. There is no mention in the record of any "no" votes, even from Owens.

But this will seem like tame stuff to many readers. For more violent forms of coercion and robbery we take you now to the CBS broadcast. You will remember the discussion, in the November 23 Commonweal, of the shape-up, the primitive method of hiring longshoremen, whereby the men are picked out twice a day by a hiring boss as they stand around at the entrance to the pier. I quote from the CBS transcript:

"Mr. Downs: Who are some of these hiring bosses who have absolute power over the men on the piers? Let's look at the most important four docks on the New York waterfront, the piers between Manhattan's 42nd and 50th Streets on the Hudson River, the piers controlled by the Mickey Bowers mob. James Walsh is manager of the New York Anti-Crime Committee. He can tell you about these men. (Pause.) Pier 84, berth of the American Export Lines, the *Constitution,* the *Independence.*

"Mr. Walsh: Hiring boss, Danny St. John, ex-convict, over 20 arrests, one prison escape, tried twice for murder in the first degree. Jury disagreed both times.

"Mr. Downs: Pier 88, berth of the French Line, the *Ile de France,* the *Liberté.*

"Mr. Walsh: Hiring boss, Toddy O'Rourke, 10 arrests, sentenced to 5 years in Sing Sing for grand larceny, a parole violator.

"Mr. Downs: Pier 90, berth of the Cunard Line, the *Queen Mary,* the *Queen Elizabeth.*

"Mr. Walsh: Hiring boss, Jimmy Clifford, 14 arrests for robbery or assault, 1 year probation for jostling, 18 months in the penitentiary for grand larceny.

"Mr. Downs: Pier 92, also the Cunard Line.

"Mr. Walsh: Hiring boss, Jimmy McNay, alias Jimmy Heyer, seven arrests, sentenced to the reformatory for unlawful entry and to Eastern State Penitentiary for 7½ to 15 years for gang robbery."

All these men are members in good standing of Local 824 of the ILA, known as "the Pistol Local" because of the large amount of gun-play that goes on therein. And a later passage:

"Mr. Downs: We have only started to look at the waterfront crime picture. We haven't mentioned the ship-jumpers racket, the dope smuggling, the phony social security cards. But there is something even more ominous. There is a single individual so big, so influential, that he cannot be touched and that individual is the power behind crime on the waterfront. That individual makes politicians, police, and union officials jump. That individual is 'Mr. Big.' We think we know his name. People who really understand the waterfront know his name, too. They all agree on who is Mr. Big.

"Bill Keating is assistant manager of the New York City Anti-Crime Committee and a former assistant district attorney of New York. He can tell you about Mr. Big.

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"Mr. Keating: Mr. Big is an important, respectable businessman. He is a church-goer. He contributes to charitable causes. He is a close friend of governors, mayors, and important political figures past and present. He started out on the lower West Side of New York. His first work was driving a one-horse wagon in the market. He became involved in a struggle for power in one of the locals of the Teamsters Union. Early in World War I he was involved in the loading of meat for the American troops in Europe and made a fortune at it. It was a rough business. Three contemporaries, Mickish Keating, Tanner Smith and Rubber Shaw were murdered. With money to back him, he stepped in and took over more and more unions on and off the waterfront. He found himself in a handy little position.

"On the one hand he controlled certain key union locals. On the other hand he owned and operated the very businesses that those key unions serviced. This put him in a beautiful position to make even more money. He obtained juicy city contracts. He expanded his empire into more and more unrelated businesses. Politically, while he has been identified with one party, he plays both sides of the fence and he sees to it that each party gets a share of whatever labor support he can deliver and that each party gets a share of campaign contributions. No one has been able to prove that Mr. Big has committed a crime, but win the confidence of any oldtime longshoreman, any veteran newspaper reporter, and cop who knows the West Side and he'll tell you the name of Mr. Big. Who is Mr. Big?

"Mr. Downs: Well, who is Mr. Big?" Mr. Downs never tells you either. COMMONWEAL readers know that Mr. Big is William J. McCormack, Knight of Malta, head of the McCormack Sand & Gravel, Penn Stevedoring, and Transit Mix Companies.

★

AND here we go back to the minutes of that ILA convention of 1947. On the afternoon of the fourth day of the convention, just prior to giving Monsignor John J. O'Donnell, the ILA chaplain, a gold membership card, Joe Ryan introduced Mr. McCormack, "still our pal and always with us," "one of the squarest employers [we] ever dealt with," etc.

Mr. McCormack then got up and gave a little talk about how his son had befriended one of his employees who had a serious accident and how on the previous Sunday he had gone to Mass with his son and his son went to Communion and "I got the feeling that he was offering his Communion for Steve Reynolds who had had this accident on Saturday. . . . So there is another McCormack, in my opinion, who is coming up in a very good way. He is a boss . . . but he has the feeling now of a closeness to his men who work with him. It is not a question of men working for us, but men working with us. (Applause)."

There were many references to God and religion in this convention, particularly by President Ryan. In his speech accepting another nomination to be president-for-life, for example: "Don't start to pray to God to spare me. I say that if I moved out [died] tomorrow I would have no regrets. I would go up there with Millner and Dave and Bondy and John Welch and the rest, and look down on you and be happy."

I feel sure that Joe Ryan was not putting on an act when he said this, however confident he may have seemed as to his eternal destination. I doubt if William McCormack was doing so when he made the personal references to Mass and Communion. Only God knows, but life is complicated and human nature is nothing if not tricky. Lincoln Steffens was not the first to explore the soul of the racketeer with a heart of gold. There are a good many attractive qualities even to Joe Ryan. Meyer Berger did a piece on him once in the New York *Times* that told how he never used any stronger language than "Jiminy Christmas," an expression that it would take some courage to use before a bunch of hardboiled longshoremen. I feel sure that Ryan is a good family man, warmhearted and loyal to his friends.

Maybe these are cases of invincible ignorance. Maybe they are extreme examples of a common phenomenon: the separation of religion and life. It isn't necessary to judge individuals and motives. The acts, the facts, the situation that exists, those things we can judge. And they stink. They stink to heaven, they cry to heaven for vengeance. This is not a mild harmless little racket. Men are being killed. Others are broken and ruined for the rest of their lives. Let us end with one final quote from the CBS broadcast and I don't charge that either Messrs. McCormack or Ryan had anything to do with this particular incident. It is just typical of what goes on on that waterfront which between them they dominate, the kind of thing either by their consent, silence or collusion, they help to perpetuate.

"Mr. Green: Three men entered the headquarters of Local 1247, ILA, 329 Grand Street, Jersey City, longshoremen's union local in Jersey City. They were Morris Manna, a prohibition mobster and former member of the alcohol mob; Barney 'Cockeye' Brown, with a long record of many years served in jail, and George Donahue. Seated in the headquarters of the union were Anthony 'Slim' Lucey, secretary-treasurer, and Frank 'Biffo' DiLorenzo. Manna was the first to speak. He went over to DiLorenzo. He said, 'You're through.' Then they told DiLorenzo to start running, get out and keep going. He went. The next one that they turned their attentions to was Lucey. 'Lucey, open up the safe,' they said. 'I'm not going to do it,' said Lucey, who had alread signed his resignation. He was rewarded for his efforts with a gun butt across the front of the mouth.

"It knocked out seven of his teeth and knocked him to the ground. They took several pieces of newspaper, put them on the ground, set fire to them, on the floor of the union headquarters. Lucey's shoeless feet were forced into the fire and held there for several minutes. He suffered severe burns of the feet. That is how three mobsters took over Local 1247 of the ILA, 329 Grand Street, Jersey City."

JOHN C. CORT.

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The Stage

I AM A CAMERA

JOHN VAN DRUTEN'S new play is set in the Berlin of 1930, just before the irresponsible and *pour le sport* twenties got what was undoubtedly coming to them, and it means to mirror the twilight of an amoral way of life without comment. The author is not concerned with causes or conclusions: he merely wishes to reflect a state of mind which once existed, an atmosphere and an emotional temper which was one part last-ditch bravura and one part honest bewilderment.

This detached and fragmentary method of writing a play is not one that normally appeals to me or—to judge by the failure of the naturalistic method generally—to very many other people. But there are several reasons why Mr. van Druten's variant of the photographic, or slice-of-life, form manages to make an impressive stand on the stage of the Empire.

One of them is the emergence of Julie Harris as a mature and emphatically versatile performer. Until now Miss Harris has been seen in roles which were closely cut to her own fragile, youthful personality. For the first few moments of "I Am a Camera" she seems to be play-acting in the wrong play, Frankie Addams putting on airs. Then slowly we discover that this combination of garish sophistication and emotional infantilism is quite deliberate. This is a new part, a complicated one, and Miss Harris has anticipated its delicate shadings with the authority and resourcefulness of a veteran; she is ahead of us all the way, and we are finally breathless trying to keep up with her.

Another of the evening's virtues—a comparative one, to be sure—is the quality of Mr. van Druten's dialogue. Whatever the limitations of the play which neglects narrative, this one is thoroughly literate, and, alongside the gibberish which has passed for language this season, "I Am a Camera" is all but manna.

The play is additionally strengthened by the author's own stage direction. Too often the so-called 'mood' play —the play of fleeting characterization and indecisive event—is left as groping in performance as it is deliberately elusive in the writing. Mr. van Druten, however, is too experienced a hand at dealing with audiences to let this happen. He is firm and assured in his management of the piece, and he has got such strong and clean-cut performances from Marian Winters and Martin Brooks—as a young couple who nerve themselves to deal with an uncertain future—that the play takes on much more substance than its casual title, and avowed method, suggests.

There is perhaps one more sense in which "I Am a Camera" is not quite so noncommittal as the author would have you believe. The play echoes a moment in history; but we know the rest of the history. If the author steadfastly refuses to take an attitude toward his people or the age they inhabited, we are likely to supply it for ourselves, out of our own experience and our own understanding of what has happened since. The author professes not to know what became of his characters; but there are not too many possible answers. We tend to write our own 'finis,' supply our own resolution, and thus give the play a defined shape.

For these reasons, and because the acting is extremely honest, "I Am a Camera" proves a sturdy and unfailingly interesting theatrical experience. (*At the Empire*)

NINA

BECAUSE the inadequacies of this Samuel Taylor adaptation of a French farce were so widely advertised in advance—Gloria Swanson attempted to leave the show in Philadelphia, David Niven gave an interview in which he said he hoped he wouldn't be noticed—the first-nighters came not so much to praise "Nina" as to bury her. There was an air of interment about the proceedings from the rise of the curtain. This is not to say that the actors dogged it, once they were out there. They went about their chores with great, almost rigorous, determination. But they knew, and we knew, that they were licked, and the evening took on the quality of a laboratory examination in which the victims bore up bravely and the curious stared in fascinated horror.

What they stared at was a styleless, spiritless revamping of that sex triangle in which the expected emotional reaction is always reversed: the husband comes to kill the lover and remains to admire him; the wife arrives for an assignation and remains to nurse her ailing husband with great tenderness; the lover, sick to death of his various involvements, attempts to flee them all—that he remains in any capacity is due, in this instance, to the fact that he is conveniently hit by a truck.

Nothing of the spontaneity, the verbal wit, or the decorative manner which is essential to this kind of joke was anywhere in evidence. Miss Swanson worked hard, and was hard to listen to. Mr. Niven played briskly, and got almost no laughs at all. Alan Webb did keep breaking in on the gloom with a choicely detailed performance as the husband—Mr. Webb is a brilliant farceur—but everything else about the evening was so uniformly soporific that it was nearly possible to resent the intrusion. Once you have really succumbed to despair, you hate to be jostled out of it. (*At the Royale*)

WALTER KERR.

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The Screen

DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS

IT WOULD be good, of course, if more of the festivities surrounding Christmas were appropriate to the original intention; but if even some of the sentiment that almost smothers Christmas these days leads man to being a little more thoughtful of his fellow men, then all the tinsel and plastic snow and red-nosed reindeers are not a total loss. Through repetition (and the mediocre performances of streamlined versions) *"A Christmas Carol"* by Charles Dickens has been reduced to an indigestible plum pudding with almost equal parts of an ogrish Scrooge, a Pollyannish Cratchit and a God-blessing Tiny Tim. Because of the overemphasis on the sentimental in these modern versions, one forgets that this tale by Dickens is really the story of a conversion, a change in attitude, which if it had been written a hundred years later might have been weighted with Freudian implications. Fortunately it was written by Dickens in 1843 and fortunately the English have made a new film version which stems from the original novel. Psychology-wise moderns can read what they want to into this story of Scrooge's conversion (through the efforts of Marley's Ghost and three Christmas Spirits: Past, Present and Future) but in any case the emphasis in the film is where it should be—on Scrooge, instead of on the prettier and more sentimental episodes revealed by the spirits.

Alastair Sim plays the role to the hilt and succeeds, what's more, in being quite convincing as the miserable miser who worships money until this particular Christmas Eve on which his former partner returns from the grave to teach him that his business is not just the counting house and exchange but mankind. Perhaps what livens Sim's portrayal most of all is the note of humor he injects in the role—a note that is authentic Dickens and keeps the characterization from being so black that it's beyond redemption. As they should, everyone else in the cast plays a supporting role to Sim's Scrooge; while some of these players come through rather weakly, others turn in fine portrayals that add much to the film's overall effect—especially Mervyn Johns as Bob Cratchit, Kathleen Harrison as Scrooge's charwoman, Hermione Baddeley as Mrs. Cratchit, John Charlesworth as Peter Cratchit. Although the screenplay by Noel Langley has wisely dropped some of Dickens and made a few changes, it is remarkable for what it has included and for its faithfulness to the spirit of the original. And in spite of the episodic quality of a story that guides its leading character through the past, present and future, Producer-director Brian Desmond-Hurst has given the whole a suspenseful Dickensian atmosphere that makes you wonder what's going to happen next. This new version of "A Christmas Carol" may not hit the high standards of such recent Dickens remakes as "Oliver Twist" and "Great Expectations," but it certainly makes a good try and should thrill audiences who are seeing it for the first time as well as those who always get nostalgic shivers of delight from Scrooge's first "Bah!" and "Humbug!" right through to Tiny Tim's last "God bless us, everyone."

★

THE movie that New York's Radio City Music Hall appropriately chose to accompany its famous Christmas stage show is *"I'll See You in My Dreams,"* which will be released throughout the United States next month. Packed with engaging and sentimental corn, it purports to tell an American success story, the biography of the lyric-writer, Gus Kahn. Following the pattern of most musical biographies in film, it shows the rise and fall and rise through the years of this serious hard-worker, and ends up with a big testimonial dinner in Hollywood at which Gus insists that the little woman, his wife to whom he owes everything, share the spotlight and applause with him. Doris Day plays Mrs. Kahn with vigor and sings several of the songs well and somehow manages not to age through the film's long span of years. But Director Michael Curtiz' great achievement is in allowing comedian Danny Thomas to be his charming self.

★

AUDIENCES who like their films bubbling with good will toward man but without any reference to formal religion should warm up to a new Italian import called *"Miracle in Milan."* Vittorio De Sica, who successfully shook us out of any complacency with two heart-breaking films "Shoe Shine" and "The Bicycle Thief," now turns up with an intellectual fairy tale that is aimed more at the head than the heart. And the head will have quite a time with it because De Sica's meanings are by no means always clear.

The screenplay by Cesare Zavattini, based on his novel *Toto il Buono,* tells the story of an ingenuous young man who says good morning to practically everyone—and means it. He joins a group of hoboes on the outskirts of Milan and his kindness and innocent good sense bring happiness to many until the wealthy owner of the property on which these squatters have settled wants his land for the oil that has been discovered there. Then the good lady who raised the youth (not really his mother because she found him in a bed of cabbages) flies down from heaven and gives him a dove that grants all wishes. At first the youth uses the dove to keep the landlord and police off the property, but then he uses it for all kinds of silly things that his hobo friends ask for. That's people for you—they're so human. Evidently De Sica didn't know how to end his parable, so he just has all his hoboes fly off to heaven.

When "Miracle in Milan" first appeared, some of the Italian critics accused De Sica of spreading Commie propaganda; but if this is what he had in mind he hasn't been too successful. He has, however, made a movie that is at times very amusing (although too long) and at times very handsome.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Of Note

Style for Christian Art

THE current number of *Liturgical Arts* (7 East 42nd St., New York 17) contains an article by William Justema entitled "Sources of Style for Christian Art." Here is an excerpt:

> Everyone at all interested in this subject knows the historical facts, knows that the Church has, from the beginning, used whatever talent was available, starting off, in the catacombs, with a style crudely similar to that employed at Pompeii. And while it may be an irritation to remember that pagan Rome has supplied Christian art (whether it be art religious chiefly in subject-matter; or art made expressly for sacred purposes) with most of its inspiration, right up until today—it need not be cause for discouragement. If St. Thomas could sanctify Aristotle, it should not be too difficult to make a good woman out of Cubism.
>
> Because once again we are taking over from the pagans. Or rather, we are filching from them certain stylistic devices they developed after looking long and hard at the arts and crafts of various primitive peoples and exotic civilizations. By doing so, each of the great modern artists has gradually achieved his own easily recognized style, or styles. But if, by their efforts, they have saved us the trouble of going to, of exposing ourselves to, their sources—it does not relieve us from the responsibility of examining their findings with the greatest care. Otherwise, in an access of enthusiasm for everything "contemporary," we will find ourselves, in a decade or two, worshipping among Congo saints in drive-in supermarkets.
>
> It is a visual problem, first and last—a game of recognition (we might call it) for the highest possible stakes. The difficulties which almost inevitably will enter—the financial, the personal, the so-called "political" difficulties—will mainly serve to provide distractions from the responsibility which rests upon the educated, or at least the open, eye.
>
> Today there is no question of a serious art expression which attempts to imitate nature. Art imitates art (i.e., other artists) even in its occasional, distant bows to nature, and although we may be confronted with the most extreme, the most outlandish examples of modern art, the eye will make its judgments—of acceptance or rejection—entirely on the basis of what it has previously seen and grown accustomed to. Moreover, the eye has always done so, regardless of intellectual or even of practical considerations. That is what gives the plastic arts a tremendous advantage over some of

Nearing the Tape

Among the journals which have manifested interest in the progress of The Commonweal's drive for 4,500 new subscriptions are *The Catholic Journalist,* official organ of the Catholic Press Association; *The Catholic Messenger* of Davenport, Iowa; the *University News* of St. Louis University; the *Torch* of St. John's University, Brooklyn. This month's *Catholic World* expressed a widely-held feeling: "The *Catholic World* has frequently disagreed editorially with Commonweal but it would be a tragedy if it did not survive. . . ."

During the week the new subscription total rose to 3,232; only 1,268 new long-term subscriptions remain between the present total and the goal. Besides this there have been $3,025 in cash donations. There have been literally hundreds of encouraging letters from subscribers and occasional readers urging the magazine to continue.

At present writing The Commonweal is in sight of its goal.

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MEXICO: A LAND OF VOLCANOES

by Archbishop Joseph H. Schlarman

Second printing just out

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—C. C. Martindale, S.J., in *Duckett's Register,* London

"Many books have been written in our time on Mexico. But until Archbishop Schlarman recently gave us *MEXICO: A LAND OF VOLCANOES—From Cortes to Aleman,* we had nothing which fully and satisfactorily met our needs. So important in our judgment is this volume that we recommend it as 'must' reading to our priests and people. Study clubs will find it a very helpful book."

—His Eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch, in *The New World,* Chicago

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the others. The evidence—in sufficient amounts—surrounds us: it has done so all our lives. Our task, then, as Christians interested in "art," is simply to keep our eyes open for the best available means for giving praise to God.

That these means change, from time to time, should surprise no one. The confusion, nowadays, results from the fact that the plastic arts are changing so rapidly as to outdistance and contradict the esoteric criticism which tries to lend them support. That this jargon is often ludicrous; that the feverish search for novel appearances is certainly suspicious (to say no more) does not alter the situation, at present so confused that many people out of weariness are willing to concede that, in modern art, "anything goes." Our own attitude differs. What we must do, as far as we are able, is to appraise the leading tendencies in contemporary art from the standpoint of their possible usefulness to the Church. (And to do this, while we still may, before some Non-Objective juggernaut overtakes us!) In the years immediately ahead, when the clergy and the faithful who are now middle-aged and in the majority shall have died, the Church will consist of those to whom most of the Christian art of the past century (whatever its avowed use, or its excuse) is rubbish. They will have been educated to another world of appearances, to a different "look" to things. And they will demand that look (including abstraction and distortion) of everything they admire, let alone venerate.

They will be partly wrong, of course. What they condemn as downright bad, may merely be repetitive (and I doubt if any age of art was ever more overgrown with pretentious repetition than the "advanced" art of today). Still, they will know what they like; indeed they will be utterly conditioned to like what they do like, and consequently it will be the business of capable artists, working with the clergy, to produce works of art, architecture, and furnishings which the intelligent majority will find acceptable. . . .

When enough of us react in the same way, we achieve what is known as a tradition. These traditions can be rather disconcerting; for instance, in their ability to line themselves up with Tradition, as a whole, after seeming to break with all traditions completely. (They do this largely by persistence; by creating a demand such as Picasso-and-company created for cubism, producing so many examples each day that it became impossible to ignore them.)

That is what is happening in the Church now. New visual traditions are being born, not always because they are "wanted," not always of the happiest marriages. After a protracted period of half-hearted modernism, of attempts to freshen up this or that historical style, a courageous minority has apparently decided that compromise is useless.

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Books

The Story of the New York Times. Meyer Berger. Simon and Schuster. $5.00.

THE first thing one notices about Meyer Berger's 100-year history of the New York *Times* is that it is extremely well-written, a circumstance which will be particularly appreciated by anyone who has done any reading of history, especially the histories of newspapers. *Times*man Berger, whose reporting won a Pulitzer Prize in 1950, writes with simple clarity, knows exactly when he has made his point, moves on to the next, and throughout sustains a fine narrative flow.

The second point of interest in the book is that the *Times* emerges without, so far as I can determine, a single blemish, unless you wish to mention Charles Miller's end-the-war editorial a few months before the 1918 armistice, an editorial which was more a mistaken judgment than it was a moral lapse. Much as I esteem the *Times,* I must put down its century of spotless virtue as incredible and let it go at that.

The most significant aspect of this history is Berger's account of how the *Times* came to be what it is today, a newspaper of international respect and renown. If people want to be entertained today, they can pick up any one of hundreds of newspapers edited and published for no other purpose than to hold its subscribers with everything from cheesecake to comic strips, the 'news' stories being dominated by lust and violence, the editors well understanding how reader-prurience and prurient inclinations can be turned into profits from the advertisers who don't care how the market is assembled as long as it is assembled.

And if the people want to nourish prejudice and bigotry they can turn to the Hearst and McCormick papers or, again, to any one of scores of other papers whose editors hate Mr. Truman so violently, for example, that they can tell their readers the magnanimous and historic UN effort in Korea is a "Truman war."

But when people want to know the truth, when they want to find out what happened and its significance, they turn to the New York *Times.* This is not to say that the *Times* reports all the reality that we as rational and responsible citizens need to know; but it is to say what is probably more important, that the *Times* reports as much of the significant reality as it finds accessible and does so, particularly in its Sunday review of the news, in a context which makes the reality intelligible. It will have no part in the crimes perpetrated against self-government and truth, crimes perpetrated by editors who either butcher the news to make room for more advertising, or distort the news to win adherents to the publisher's prejudices.

One might believe that the *Times'* march to superiority "just happened." We hear so much about its objectivity, its impersonal and disinterested journalism, we may overlook the importance of the personal, deliberative decisions of its three or four publishers who caused the effect.

Henry Raymond, founder of the *Times* in 1851, and its first publisher and editor, planted the germ of the idea of a socially useful newspaper, the idea of a newspaper which should (and later would) be a social institution of positive worth. In an opening statement to his readers, a statement which can be appreciated only when placed against the violent, personal journalism of men like Horace Greeley and James Bennett, Raymond said the *Times* would "seek to allay, rather than excite, agitation . . . and substitute reason for prejudice, a cool and intelligent judgment for passion, in all public action, and in all discussion of public affairs."

George Jones succeeded Raymond in 1869 and although he did little to develop the later general excellence of the newspaper, did distinguish himself and the *Times* by smashing the notorious Tweed ring with damaging news articles and editorials at a time when the rest of the New York papers observed a "kept" silence, sometimes mistaken for discretion.

But it was Adolph Ochs who brought the *Times* to its maturity and superiority. He came to New York in 1896, after notable success with the Chattanooga, Tenn. *Times,* and bought the New York paper, then in the hands of receivers and staggering along with 9,000 subscribers. With simple wisdom Ochs decided what the people needed was a newspaper which would give them "all the news that was fit to print." This was the era when Hearst and Pulitzer were trying to out-sensationalize each other. The people in New York responded to Ochs. Within a year his policy of honorable and useful journalism had shot *Times* circulation and advertising up; other newspapers took notice; and the editor of the Minneapolis *Times* commented: "There is no other journal in the country that approaches more nearly the ideal daily newspaper."

As profits began to roll in, Ochs used them to improve the newspaper, expanding the physical plant again and again; hiring competent domestic and foreign reporters; and gradually turning the *Times* into a journal of both documentation and interpretation. At the time of his death in 1935, Adolph Ochs had put back into the paper two-thirds of the profits earned during his 39 years of ownership.

"The [Ochs] years were to prove," comments Berger, "that the Ochs formula was best for the long haul, that an intelligent reading public bought newspapers—strange as it seemed to some—to read the news."

Everybody seemed to believe during Ochs' life, and I dare say almost everybody believes it today, that he employed some magic formula for building a truly great and at the same time prosperous newspaper. He told his competitors over and over that the *Times'* success was due to a combination of hard and im-

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aginative newsgathering, integrity and a continuous sense of public service.

"Our greatest pride," said Ochs to the journalism students at Columbia University in 1925, "is that we have vindicated the newspaper reading public; that we have demonstrated that there is a reward for honest, decent, dignified journalism."

Meyer Berger gives real volume to the story of his newspaper as he shows how *Times* reporters and editors executed the Ochs policy, keeping well out in front of their competitors both in the extension and depth of the reality covered in the past 50 years. One can only wish after putting down this story that other newspapers in other cities would begin to vindicate the newspaper reading public, recognize their innate intelligence and their natural desire to know all the significant truth their minds can get at. Far from being idealistic, Adolph Ochs showed just how realistic such a newspaper can be.

DONALD MCDONALD.

S.O.S.: The Meaning of Our Crisis. Pitirim A. Sorokin. Beacon. $2.50.

THE eminent Harvard sociologist returns to a topic with which he has dealt repeatedly since his *Social and Cultural Dynamics* was published in 1937. But what appeared then as a threat has become dreadful reality, and what was stated by way of prediction has been fulfilled. *The Crisis of Our Age* (1941) has progressed and attained its height. Modern culture is disintegrating and rushing to its doom in fearful catastrophes. Evil forces rule the world; The Killer and The Pervert are rampant. But in the midst of darkness and turmoil, Professor Sorokin discerns a gleam of hope. He sees a new generation emerging and a new culture. Mere germs as yet, they are the beginning of a new era, the beginnings of the fall of "sensate culture."

Thus, his book bears a twofold aspect. It is the objective vindication of the author's views proposed in his prior works, and it is an impassioned accusation against the dominant trends of our times as well as a prophetic outlook into a better future. Corresponding to these two aspects, the book falls into two parts. The first 82 pages are what the author calls "a dramatic, impressionistic-expressionistic portraiture" of our age, for which he claims Erasmus' *Praise of Folly,* Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus,* and Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* as predecessors. The second part deals with the "law of polarization" and with "totalitarianism."

It is hardly possible to summarize the first part. It speaks on behalf of the victims of our times and is addressed to those who rule, be they statesmen or military leaders, politicians or adepts of social science, writers or actors. These pages are filled with bitterness and despair, with sharpest irony and moving appeal. It is necessary that the soul be "re-enthroned," that the commandment "thou shalt not kill" be universally obeyed, that life be rebuilt on the great truths, especially

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on the Sermon on the Mount. The spirit speaking from these pages is Christian, but the great moral principles alive in other creeds are recognized.

The "law of polarization" states that in times of crisis and calamity opposite trends come to the fore in individuals and in society and that their opposition becomes more and more marked. The author criticizes, and justly, the one-sided view which traces all aggression to frustration and believes that all frustration results in aggression. Besides aggression, the result may be submissive passivity, enlivened creative effort, or increase of altruism and religious spiritualization. All four responses can be observed in our days.

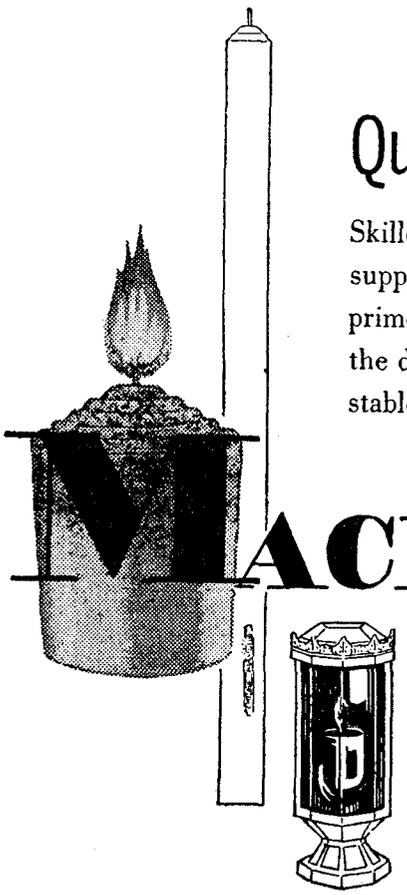
It is pointed out that "polarization," or an internal cleavage, is characteristic of the individual mentality today as well as of group-behavior. The last decade has led to a split in Western man's personality and conduct and, consequently, to a growing disintegration and confusion. Likewise, groups stand in sharp opposition, polarized around the extreme wings of each. Western culture is in a state of disintegration; its creativity is on the decline, with the exception of the natural sciences and technology, whose discoveries, however, are more destructively used than otherwise. But the author discerns an incipient creative reintegration.

Catastrophic situations strengthen the tendency towards totalitarianism, of which governmental regimentation is the initial stage. This trend is especially visible in times of war and revolution, as is shown by a brief survey of history and of recent events. Not war, nor rearmament, nor threats, nor propaganda of hate, are "the medicine against communism and totalitarianism," but "peace and lack of emergency."

One may disagree with the author on several points. But anyone who has preserved some objectivity of judgment and has not been hypnotized by slogans and propaganda will have to recognize that much is true in Professor Sorokin's critique of our times. Nor can anyone deny the earnestness of his appeal or the documentation submitted. The author is entitled to claim that the history of the last ten years has supported what he foresaw earlier. And many a reader may be led to reconsider whether and to what extent his actions and attitudes are in conformity with the ideals he professes. This slender volume deserves to be read thoughtfully. RUDOLF ALLERS.

The Masters. C. P. Snow. Macmillan. $3.50.

IT IS NOT the modern novelist's distinctive feature to find men complex and life complicated. Stendhal makes us aware of such perplexity as does Dostoievski. There is the almost painful torment of Levin in Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina.* There is such complexity in Anna's husband that no matter how much one comes to know him he remains unknown. But if the fragmentation of man was



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known to the Victorian novelist, the mixture of human motives known to him, the conflicts that fatigue the mind and crawl over the body's tense flesh, it was a knowledge he generally withheld. Thackeray's Emily, in *Vanity Fair,* Dickens' Rosa, in *David Copperfield,* are much more subtle and tensioned women than either novelist has let us clearly know. It is not a matter of delicacy which is involved here; it is a matter of convention. Wilkie Collins was disobedient to the convention, but somehow critics refuse to treat Collins as if he were a serious novelist.

C. P. Snow's *The Masters* reminds me of all this because, by comparison with Graham Greene or our own Faulkner, his is a Victorian novel. In it there is great delicacy, but it is a thing natural to him. There is no evidence that delicacy was natural either to Thackeray or to Dickens. Mr. Snow's insights into human character are great, but it occurs to him that there are both decent reticences and readers' perceptions, that men and women have certain thoughts and perform certain actions that do not require literary notice.

Perhaps, now that the necessary battle for sexual freedom in art has been won, we will get used again to seeing people in novels in perpendicular positions. The complexity of life and of men is not, by that fact alone, any less the concern of the novelist. After all a civilized man is one who is decently self-suppressed. Moreover, power is what our age is most aware of and the desire for power is the chief purpose of most men. Our lives, in this generation, are shaped by men who want power, are getting power, or are engaged in maintaining it.

It is to the desire for acquiring power that Mr. Snow has addressed himself. With its concern he is concerned. To its exposition he brings the slowness which comes from artistry and patience; the quiet, leisurely unfolding of his story reveals him as a man who has respect for time, and is aware of the fact that all the violence a civilized man may show may be in the crease of his forehead, in the closing of his hand in unperceived tension, that words are swords, and that men may choose to use them as such, that the spirit may be wounded and forever hurt.

This novel, which deals with elections in an English college, is part of a series, and it is the only one with which I am familiar. It is written in beautiful English, a thing in itself to make it distinguished. But it is a novel, obedient to its form, and rich with understanding of the motives of men. That which is urgent in all men, good and bad, this novel makes us aware of. But it is written with irony at its saddest; men are not condemned, but are understood. They have to be worked with in a society which is closed and formal and largely self-contained. One of the Fellows says of another: "Since they were only men, they could be treacherous and the next time loyal beyond belief. One took them as they were."

The world of which he writes Mr. Snow has arranged perfectly, stitching it slowly and completely, and al-

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most seductively, into our esthetic consciousness. His is a special world, yet a little cosmos, and Mr. Snow has so created it that his book fills us with delight; and we are made quiet, calm, subtle and reflective, detached and wise, and touched fugitively with brilliance—all qualities which we have stolen from this novelist while he was giving us, for a while, the radiance of his urbanity and grace.

FRANCIS DOWNING

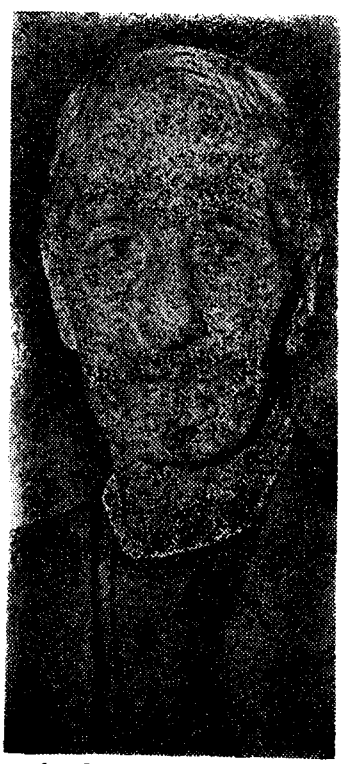
Turn West, Turn East: Mark Twain and Henry James. Henry Seidel Canby. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50

THE writing of cultural history is a maddeningly difficult thing, just how difficult we can begin to imagine if we pause to reflect that for every Henry Adams, there have been thousands of inglorious failures. Something more than talent is demanded of the historian who hopes to translate artistic phenomena into social symbols; he must be not only sensitive but also know how to stab our complacency with a synthesis. This sensitivity and this gift are happily apparent in Henry Seidel Canby's latest, and his study of Twain and James, while it tells us much of their significance, tells us even more of ourselves.

The artist in America, Dr. Canby suggests, may turn either East or West, an idea which sounds too simple for words, but which actually explains one of the fundamental conflicts in American civilization. For Twain and James were not the only creative artists to be so magnetized; we could go on citing other examples, such as Homer and Sargent in painting, or Wright and White in architecture.

A cruder critic than Canby might arbitrarily demand that all artists face in one of the two directions, but the author of *Turn West, Turn East* is fond of both the sunset and the sunrise. He congratulates Mark Twain for sticking close to the USA, then blesses Henry James for running off to England. "Neither would or could read the other," Canby confesses. "Everybody else read Twain and only the élite have as yet read James. Mark was often offensively American. Henry shocked even his family by his patina (it was only a patina) of Britishness. Yet both will live in literature by best describing what each called American innocence for an increasingly curious world."

Henry James, as we all know, grew up in an Eastward-turning family, and Dr. Canby, to put the novelist's childhood in the proper perspective, quotes from a letter of Henry James, Sr. to Emerson. "Looking upon our four stout boys, who have no playroom within doors, and import shocking bad manners from the street, with much pity, we gravely wonder whether it would not be better to go abroad for a few years with them, allowing them to absorb French and German and get a better sensuous education than they are likely to get here." This emphasis on a "sensuous" education was something which Mark Twain could



Don Luigi Sturzo
The New York Times

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scarcely appreciate. Had Tom Sawyer met young James on the streets of Hannibal, he would have bloodied his nose, Dr. Canby suspects.

The contrast of the two men's attitudes on the eve of their literary careers is all the more striking. Twain, Dr. Canby thinks, might have remained a wild humorist and never thought of turning writer had he not married a respectable girl from a well-to-do family. "What he needed," Canby adds, "was the kind of income that becomes property, which means, or meant then, books." Whereas young James was far more meditative. "We have over here," he wrote, "the high natural light of chance and space and prosperity. America is a very sufficient literary field. But it will yield its secrets only to a really *grasping* imagination. . . . To write well and worthily of American things one needs even more than elsewhere to be a master. But unfortunately one is less."

Of course Twain and James could never agree when it came to judging the behavior of Americans in Europe. In 1869, the very year in which Twain published *The Innocents Abroad,* James was so distressed by the bad manners of the tourists he had come across in Florence that he wrote his mother that "there is but one word to use in regard for them —vulgar, vulgar, vulgar. Their ignorance — their stingy, defiant, grudging attitude toward everything European—their perpetual reference of all things to some American standard of precedent which exists only in their own unscrupulous windbags —and then our unhappy poverty of voice, of speech, of physiognomy—these things glare at you hideously."

Priggish James might seem, on this and on other occasions, yet as Dr. Canby points out, his creative powers revived at the age when Twain's genius turned stale. Dr. Canby hints this may have been because Twain was a neurotic, concerned only with the creation of "pure value," while James was ever the analyst of values. "The creation of pure value is subject to the many hazards of disillusioning experience . . . whereas the criticism of values should, within reasonable limits, increase in acuteness as long as the mind continues to mature."

No one can be expected to agree with all of the author's conclusions, and this reviewer finds it hard to believe that James was quite the observer Dr. Canby makes out. Was not Mrs. Wharton a far keener reporter of the superficialities which stamp the observer than the admittedly more profound creator of the Princess Casamissima? But this is a trifling objection to bring against a truly delightful book.

WAYNE ANDREWS.

The Face of War. Charles and Eugene Jones. Prentice-Hall. $5.

CHARLES and Eugene Jones are identical twins and crack photographers. They were working for rival Washington papers when the Korean war broke out. They quit their jobs and wangled a new one, for both, from NBC-TV.

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The pictures in this book were selected from their motion-film strips and are accompanied by a moving text. The book is a graphic testament to the fact that war *is* hell for the few men who actually do the fighting.

• REVIEWERS •

DONALD MCDONALD is a member of the editorial staff of the *Catholic Messenger,* Davenport, Iowa.

RUDOLF ALLERS is a professor of psychology at Georgetown and the author of *The Psychology of Character.*

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